Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior today proposed new regulations so Indian tribes having organized forest enterprises may be able to sell lumber and other forest products without supervision by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Bureau guidance over sales, the Department explained, is needed for small scale operations where the tribal enterprise organization has limited experience in conducting such sales. It also serves a purpose where there is no formal agreement between the tribal forest enterprise and the tribal or individual Indian owners of the forest land.

The situation is different, however, in the case of larger and better organized tribal enterprises such as the Navajo Forest Products Industries operating on the reservation in Arizona and New Mexico and the Fort Apache Sawmill Enterprise in Arizona. In these cases, the Department's policy is to delegate broad responsibilities for the sale of forest products produced by the enterprise and retain the trust responsibility for management of the timberlands by a formal agreement between the tribal enterprise and the timber land owners. The change in the regulations is intended to effectuate this policy.

Interested persons may submit comments or objections to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington 25, D. C., within 30 days after publication of the proposed amendment in the Federal Register.